

A message from the coordinator to outgoing LEADs (2020-21 Batch)

I want to congratulate our LEADs for their extraordinary community service throughout 2020-21. Although, unfortunately, the year was eclipsed by pandemic COVID limiting our activities, our LEADs and center coordinators have seized every opportunity to serve the community and those in need. Thanks to the vaccine, our LEADs are fully back to serving the community, all while following the CDC guidelines.

Sewa Meals program continued and reached its first birthday in July 2021. All our centers are part of Sewa Meals together; we serve over 500 meals a month. We also continued with a quarterly cleanup of Route 27 in Metuchen that we had adopted in 2018 as part of the Adopt-A-Highway Program of the NJ state. This year, many LEADs who met the age requirement could participate.

We had 145 LEADs registered, and many of you have put in over 100 hours of volunteering. In addition, a few exceptional students have accomplished over 200 hours of service. This is a testament to your dedication to serving the community.

Moving on to new steps taken this year, the Somerset center completed its first year and performed extraordinarily all their LEADs. This year, we also started a few new partnerships with AttachAvi Autism Foundation. A batch of select few from your group participated in the first batch to interact with young adults in the autism spectrum to enrich social and emotional interaction using well-established techniques. This was an extraordinary opportunity for our LEADs to make a difference.

Many other innovative projects also began this year, some of which:

- Princeton Crane Project
- Butterfly Art at Bordentown Museum
- Student Desk building for underprivileged for remote study during pandemic
- Community gardens (including one at Kiddie Keep Well Camp)
- Boat Building Project with Lower Raritan Watershed Partnership
- Pumpkin compost and electronic recycling for sustainability
- Green fairs to educate and distribute reusable grocery bags to limit single use plastic bags
- Plantation of hundreds of trees at Neshaminy park
- Cleanup of numerous parks and beaches
- Cutlery bundle for Soup Kitchen
- Birthday/Holiday Cards for Senior Citizens
- Treats for Troops with Project Gratitude

Additionally, you all had the opportunity to participate in the 1st National LEAD Convention and a select group also conducted a few sessions. Our chapter was very instrumental in the planning, organizing, and execution of this convention. Our 4-minute-long animated LEAD Program video clip was very well received.

I would like to thank all the parent volunteers who helped to make this year another success. Also, I would like to particularly thank Sandesh Ji, our LEAD Coordinator and Anitha Ji, our Program Coordinator for their relentless effort to make this program what it is. There are also many core volunteers who help make this program successful with their background support. I would like to thank all these core volunteers and center coordinators for their commitment and dedication to get things done. It is not easy to run a program for 150 high school students in such an organized manner.

Our sponsors and donors have been key to run various projects and SewaMeal program throughout the year. I would like to thank Punjabi Chamber of Commerce, Ram Malladi, Rising Future, State Farm Agency of Shilpa Rathi, AttachAvi Autism Foundation and many parents whose support is vital to run our program.

Lastly, I welcome the new LEADs (2021-22) to the program and look forward to more initiatives to serve the community. I close this message with a quote,

“One of the most important things you can do on this earth is to let people know they are not alone.” — Shannon L. Alder

Yours in Sewa,
Rajesh Sharma

Chapter Highlights

- ❖ Sewa Diwali Food drive
- ❖ Treat for Troops
- ❖ Sewa Meals

Center Highlights

- ❖ Vadtal Dham
- ❖ Planting @ Fousliak Preserve
- ❖ Flags for Heroes
- ❖ Pumpkin Compost

Volunteer(s) Spotlight



Srinivasa Nalamalapu Ji has been with Sewa Central Jersey since March 2020. Along with Kishore Palle, he has started the Cherry Hill center and has assisted in many projects such as the Toy and Clothing Drive, Bake Sale, and Online Camps/Tutoring. Outside of Sewa, he also helps educate underprivileged kids in his hometown in India. In addition, Srinivasa Ji engages in many volunteering activities on behalf of TD Bank, one of which was making food for Camden Cathedral Soup kitchen to feed the homeless. Srinivasa Ji is from Nidamanuru, Prakasam District in Andhra Pradesh, and lives in Mount Laurel, New Jersey, with his two kids Sarayu, Akhil, and wife Sailaja. He has been working for TD Bank for 16 years and won prestigious America's Most Convenient Bank Environment Leader award in the second quarter of 2021 for his efforts towards "Greener communities." He also initiated a Sewa center in Maine, USA. Srinivasa Ji enjoys volunteering and giving back to the community.

Sewa Diwali Food Drive

Sewa Diwali Food Drive collaboration of organizations to collect food and other items that can be donated to those in need. Sewa International has been taking part in this since 2018. Each year all our leads across the Central Jersey chapter put tremendous efforts into reaching out to the community, motivating them to donate for a good cause. This year our leads have collected ~**12502** pounds of goods such as pasta, oats, cereal, rice, canned food, sauces, cookies, crackers, chips, juices, granola bars, and diapers. Our leads do their due diligence in verifying the expiration dates of each of the items collected, sort and box them to be dropped off at the drop-off sites. Below are some of the stats of our collection and drop-offs

Chesterfield: 3760 lb

Homefront NJ, Lawrence Township, St Mary's Food Bank, Bordentown - 3700 lbs

Radha Gopinath Temple - 60 lbs

Cherry Hill: 550 lbs

Cherry Hill Food Pantry - 550 lbs

Edison: 1680 lbs

Metuchen YMCA - 480 lbs

Hands of Hope Community Soup Kitchen - 1200 lbs

Monroe: 3512 lbs

Mercer Street Friends Food Bank - 1408 lbs

South Brunswick Food Pantry - 45 lbs

Monmouth Worship Center, Marlboro - 263 lbs

Presbyterian Church, Jamesburg

Somerset: 3000 lbs

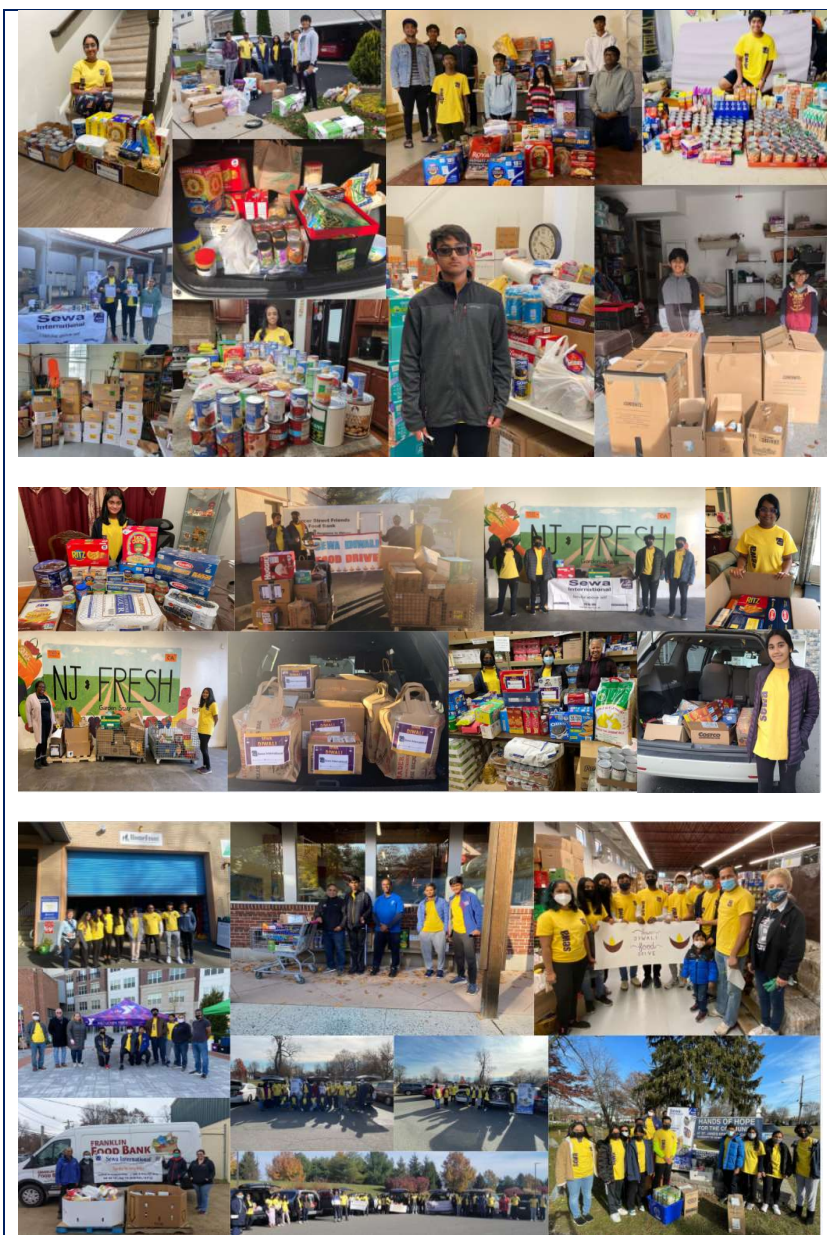
Trenton Soup Kitchen - 1000 lbs

Franklin Township Food Bank - 1000 lbs

Food Bank Network of Somerset - 800 lbs

Little Free Pantry, Bridgewater YMCA - 200 lbs





Treat for Troops

Treats for Troops is a Halloween Candy collection program where the volunteer groups/organizations collect excess Halloween candy from their local communities & distribute them to deployed troops, local military units, veterans, and first responders, providing a precious opportunity for grateful Americans to thank those who serve our nation. This program is administered & coordinated by Soldier Angels & Operation Gratitude.

Sewa Central Jersey Chapter has been organizing the Treats for Troops Candy Drive since 2019. We started with 200 pounds of collection in 2019 and this year we collected a whopping **4,400** pounds of candy. As part of this drive about 160 of our leads reached out to their friends, relatives, & neighbors and set up drop-off boxes in the townships, schools, libraries, & local businesses. The candy collected was delivered to

- Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst (2100 pounds)
- Operation Shoebox NJ (1500 pounds)
- Brilliant Smiles Office, North Plainfield (600 pounds)
- Veterans in Somerset on the Veterans Day honoring event.

At the JBMDL, LtCol Mark Berthelotte came along with his unit to Thank Sewa volunteers for their efforts in the candy drive. As a token of their appreciation, the Sewa team received a service award, which the commander generally gives to unit men for the exceptional service. The 2100 pounds of candy donated to JBMDL

will be distributed among 500+ military families on base. Overall, the Treats for Troops was a great project where Leads got a chance to meet & listen to our troops. It was a unique experience & very satisfying to at least arrange small, sweet treats for our troops, who dedicate their lives for our safety.

Video Link to LtCol Mark Berthelotte speech <https://youtu.be/IJgrkRvTOSQ>



Sewa Meals

Somerset Leads came together to make 2 meals each for 50 adults and 6 kids which was served at United Methodist Church, New Brunswick. The meal consisted of delicious Pulao , Chana masala , Chickpeas-veggie salad, pasta, grilled cheese sandwiches , PBJ sandwiches , cookies and fresh fruits. Sewa family is thankful to the sponsors of the meals for the month.



Chesterfield Leads made 165 meals & delivered them to the Westminster Presbyterian Church in Trenton. The meal consisted of a veggie burrito bowl, tortilla chips, brownies & and a bag of candy. All the Leads & parents made and packaged the meals with great enthusiasm. Our heartfelt thanks to all sponsors for their

kind donations towards this month's Sewa Meal. This month's meals were sponsored by

- Manju & Kannian Murali
- Shilpa & Mukul Rathi (State Farm)
- Suchitra & Sai Krishna Potluri



Monroe leads prepared and delivered about 60 adult meals and four kid's meals on November 14th and November 21st. Many Thanks to lead Raghav's family to celebrate his birthday and lead Anurag's family, for sponsoring the meals for this month. The meals were delivered to the Union Methodist Church @ New Brunswick, NJ.





Edison leads made 50 burrito bowls and delivered to the Ozanam Shelter

Vadtal Dham

Sewa Leads from Monroe and Somerset centers volunteered at Vadtal Dham temple to assist "Diwali Anna Kuutt" celebrations. Leads participated in various activities such as decorating the food trays offered to God, managing the food stations, serving food for the attendees, clearing trash, and assisting guests in their visit.



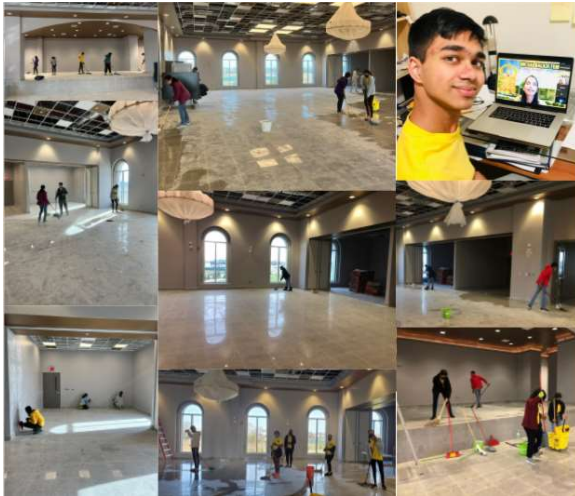
Forest Restoration at Folsiak Preserve

On Veterans day, Sewa leads participated in a forest restoration program at Folsiak Preserve. Leads worked to help start natural re-generation of Ash trees, rapidly decreasing population. An estimate of every 1 in 5 ash trees will die, which make up 95% of the forest population. The loss of habitat will decrease bird populations and increase the number of invasive species in the area that will not help the ecosystem. Seven leads of the Monroe and two-parent volunteers planted about 60 bushes to stop invasive plants from taking up land in which ash trees will grow.



Balaji Temple Activities

Monroe leads assisted Balaji Temple volunteers over the weekends, both in-person and virtually. On Saturdays, the leads supported the administration of educational zoom meetings. On Sundays, the leads went in person to help with various activities such as cleaning the temple rooms, lobby, main hallway and other hallways, prayer hall, and classrooms.



Radha Gopinath temple

Edison leads volunteered at Radha Gopinath Temple to help distribute the prasad to the attendees and prepare a lounging area for them to eat. While making sure to follow all necessary safety and hygiene precautions, leads managed to work as a team to serve a filling meal to the devotees on the auspicious day of the Govardhan festival. The temple authorities greatly appreciated the act of community service by these Leads, and they hope to see these rising leaders continue assisting their local temples.



Flags for Heroes

Around a month after Sewa volunteers put national flags up at the community display at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Hamilton to honor our heroes, it was time to take them down. On November 20th, between 10 am- 12 pm, over 20 Lead Sewa volunteers from Chesterfield & Monroe helped unscrew the flags off the ground. It was a process of finding an assigned coordinator to guide us to a designated flag to remove and then taking it back to drop-off, keeping a vital goal NEVER to let the flag touch the ground in names of respect. We took off about 300 flags that we previously had put up. Leads took pride in taking part in the event



Pumpkin Compost

On November 14th, around 45 Sewa volunteers from Chesterfield, Bordentown, Mount Laurel, Florence & Cherry Hill picked up 500+ pumpkins from their communities & dropped them off at Honey Brook Organic Farm for composting. In partnership with the Chesterfield Township Green team, Environment Commission & Honey Brook Organic Farm, this initiative from the Sewa Central Jersey Chapter encourages residents to dispose of their pumpkins in an eco-friendly way. All residents were requested to put the pumpkins on the curbside by noon & our leads picked them between 12 PM - 5 PM. Many residents have asked us to come back after Thanksgiving; we will be doing one more round of Pumpkin Compost Drive on Sunday, December 5th.



AttachAvi Autism Foundation Holiday party for Young Kids

Our LEADS participated in Christmas party for the young kids of the AttachAvi Autism foundation. LEADS took care of the kids during the holiday party , conducted a lot of games and fun activities , ensure the kids has their food . Kids also enjoyed a photo shoot with SANTA and met firefighters .



Newsletter Team



Akhil Kalepalli
Grade: 10
Interests: Boys Scout
Favorite project: Musical Concert@
Bridgewater temple



Atharva Kadam
Grade: 9
Interests: Tennis, Cricket, Reading
Favorite project: Sewa Meals



Shubhan Byram
Grade: 8
Interests: Reading, Volley Ball
Favorite project: Sewa Meals



Daksh Goel
Grade: 10
Interests: Soccer, Badminton, Anime
Favorite project: Vadtal Dham



Riddhi Rajpal
Grade: 8
Interests: Vocal training;
Kathak dance.
Favorite project: Sewa Meals



Sarayu Nalamalapu
Grade: 10
Interests: Baking Running
Favorite project: Pumpkin Compost



Vedant D. Nair
Grade: 11
Interests: Music, Soccer
Favorite project: Bucket Garden



Jayant Venkatesan
Grade: 10
Interests: Mridangam, Tennis
Favorite project: Treats for Troops



Sanjay Ravishankar
Grade: 9
Interests: Drawing, STEM
Favorite project: Summer Tutoring



Advait D. Nair
Grade: 11
Interests: Photography, Track
Favorite project: Reforestation



Devanshi Voleti
Grade: 10
Interests: Tennis, Bharatanatyam
Favorite project: Sewa Meals



Sanketh Kamath
Grade: 11
Interests: Soccer
Favorite project: AttachAvi



Srinidhi Allada
Grade: 9
Interests: Reading and Writing ; published her book
"Multiverse Mania " in Amazon
Favorite project: Vadtal Dham

Upcoming Events

- ❖ MANAVI Support
- ❖ Pumpkin Compost
- ❖ Sewa Meals
- ❖ Winter Coat Drive
- ❖ AttachAvi Autism Foundation
Holiday Party for Young Adults
- ❖ Radha Gopinath Musical
Performance with Sewa
Volunteers
- ❖ Holiday Toys for Kids (KKWC and
Metuchen YMCA)

Communication Channels

Please visit our chapter website and follow-on Twitter, Facebook & Instagram

Web: <https://Sewausa.org/central-jersey-chapter>

Twitter: @JerseySewa

FB: @JerseySewa or Sewa Central Jersey

Instagram: centraljerseysewa

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